

**SUFFOLK COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
July 22, 2016

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**Water Quality Advisory for Private-Well Owners in Areas of Westhampton**

The US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has identified two chemicals known as PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) as emerging contaminants. These chemicals are part of a class of chemicals known as perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), which are currently unregulated by the federal government. PFCs have been used in a number of industrial and commercial products such as firefighting foam, as well as coatings that repel water, oil, stains and grease. Thus, people may be exposed to PFOS and PFOA through air, water, or soil from industrial sources and from consumer products. In 2013, major water supply companies began testing their wells for PFOS and PFOA. Results of that monitoring have recently become available.

In the absence of federal regulation, New York State took aggressive action and became the first state in nation to regulate PFOS and PFOA as hazardous substances, which enables the State to use the legal authority and financial resources of the State Superfund Program to clean up contaminated sites.

Through monitoring conducted under a US EPA program known as the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, PFOS was detected in public supply wells in the vicinity of the New York State Air National Guard Base at Gabreski Airport located at Old Riverhead Road in Westhampton Beach. The results of this sampling have already been reported to residents in the annual water quality report and to the US EPA. Measures have been taken to address the public water supply. Currently, the public drinking water supply in the area is below the current EPA lifetime health advisory level of 0.07 ppb. EPA's health advisory levels are established to protect even the most sensitive populations, including fetuses during pregnancy and breastfed babies, against adverse health effects. See US EPA fact sheet on perfluorinated compounds for more information ([https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/drinkingwaterhealthadvisories\\_pfoa\\_pfos\\_updated\\_5.31.16.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/drinkingwaterhealthadvisories_pfoa_pfos_updated_5.31.16.pdf) ).

To assess the drinking water quality of properties served with private wells, the Suffolk County Department of Health Service (SCDHS) will be conducting a private well survey in the vicinity of the Airport property. Once these wells are identified, they will be sampled for these contaminants and the State has offered to provide laboratory analysis support. If your property is served with a private well, and your residence is located south of the LIRR tracks, and East of Beaverdam Creek, Westhampton, and West of Quantuck Creek in Westhampton, and you would like to have your drinking water tested,

please contact the SCDHS Office of Water Resources at (631) 852-5810. Again, this notice does not affect residences which utilize public water.

As part of the ongoing efforts of the Governor's Water Quality Rapid Response Team, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has informed Suffolk County and the Air National Guard that NYSDEC is investigating Gabreski Airport, as a potential inactive hazardous waste disposal site, also referred to as a State Superfund site. This action is being taken because firefighting foam, which may contain PFOS, was, or is currently being used, at the base. The Air National Guard has committed to conducting a site investigation and NYSDEC is working to expedite their submission of a draft work plan. NYSDEC has commenced a complementary site characterization and will be mobilizing contractors to the site in an effort to pinpoint the potential sources of contamination.

Out of an abundance of caution, if you are using a private well as your water supply, you may want to consider using bottled water for drinking, cooking and preparing infant formula until your well is tested and the quality of your supply can be assured. This sampling effort applies only to private wells, as the public water supply has already been addressed and sampled to ensure water quality meets health criteria.

Suffolk County will offer bottled water to residents in this area with private wells at:

Village of Westhampton Beach City Hall, located at 165 Mill Road, Westhampton Beach, NY 11978

- This weekend's hours:
  - Friday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 3pm-8pm
  - Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10am-3pm
  - Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 10am-3pm
- Weekday hours:
  - Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup> through Friday July 29<sup>th</sup>, 7:30am-7:30pm

Residents with additional questions are advised to call the New York State Water Quality Hotline: 800-801-8092 (Monday - Friday: 9 am - 8 pm; Saturday: 9 am - 3 pm).